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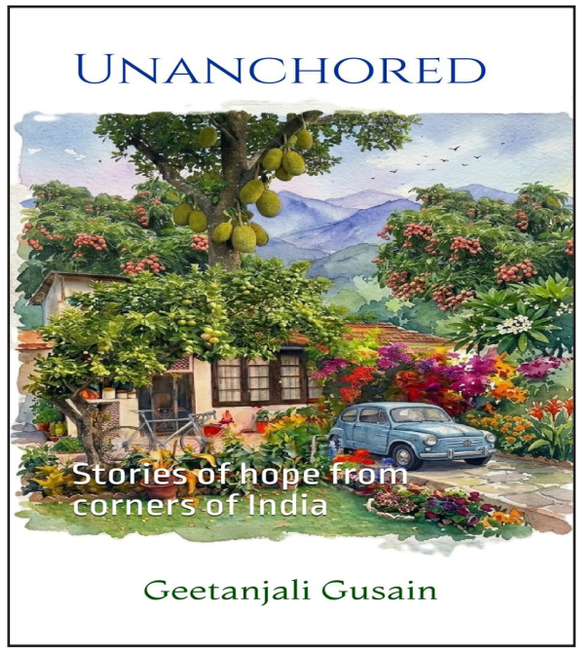
A Voice to Watch out for: Geetanjali Gusain's Unanchored Captures the Quiet Resilience of Everyday India

Geetanjali Gusain



In her debut short story collection, Unanchored, Geetanjali Gusain delivers a deeply evocative, slice-of-life portrait of the Indian subcontinent, celebrating the extraordinary resilience tucked inside ordinary lives.

Geetanjali's canvas spans the geographic and emotional breadth of India. In Bhimtal, friends hang pinecones outside their doorstep; in Mussoorie, a family finds refuge from the scorching sun under the shade of Amaltas trees. The reader is whisked from a carpet of harsingar flowers in Jaipur and the mouthwatering chaos of Indore's Chappan Bhog market to a quiet home in Kerala where a child celebrates Vishu. These regional landscapes are rendered with vivid sensory detail and deep affection, offering a rich glimpse into the sheer cultural and geographical diversity of the subcontinent while drawing readers effortlessly into moments of vulnerability, identity, and quiet self-discovery.

What sets Unanchored apart is its character-driven depth. The figures navigating these pages feel remarkably like our own friends, neighbours, relatives, or our own internal conflicts. In one standout scene, a grandfather offers tender wisdom to a child distraught over an unsprouted mango seed:

"There will be many times in your life when people will bring you their own failures and call them facts. You must decide whose map you are following. If you want the shade, you are the only one who needs to believe the green is coming. The earth is silent, Veer; it doesn't argue. It only waits to see if you will quit.

In another poignant tale, a character navigating a major life transition recalls his father's words during their Partition journey from Peshawar: "We are alive by God's Grace.

The rest is what we make of ourselves."

Throughout the collection, Gusain explores universal themes: hope amidst adversity, identity and belonging, compassion, and the complex ties of family, with warmth and simplicity. Her prose is accessible yet poetic, remaining descriptive without being excessive. The simple chapter names are based on reminders of nature The Oak Trees, The Raindrop. They make you tap into simple memories and far from being overly sentimental, the novel presents kindness as a grounded and resilient force. It directly challenges modern cynicism by proving that human decency remains a powerful conscious act. Ultimately, the story reconfigures our understanding of home, framing it not as brick and mortar, but as an internal archive of loved ones, sensory moments, and shared warmth.

Geetanjali's keen eye for human detail is undoubtedly honed by her remarkable professional trajectory. Recognized as one of India's Most Impactful Women Leaders of 2025, her two-decade career spans leading roles as the former Managing Director for a prominent German Agritech to spearheading complex heritage-to-luxury hospitality conversions for The MRS Group (renowned for Suryagarh, Jaisalmer). Her extensive travels and work across these contrasting worlds provide the authentic, multi-dimensional backdrop that enriches her storytelling.

Both comforting and soul-stirring, Unanchored serves as a gentle reminder of our innate strength when feeling lost. It is a striking, introspective debut that leaves readers deeply moved, and eagerly anticipating what Geetanjali Gusain writes next.